No-Man's-Land: Hearing the Voices of Palestinian Young Men Residing in East Jerusalem

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Through a qualitative study of adolescents and young men in East Jerusalem, the scope of this study explores the "crisis in masculinity" that is occurring in East Jerusalem. In the course of this work, we interviewed 45 young men and 18 young women about their concerns. In addition to violence, there were other topics of concern that we identified in our prestudy of this work. This included their schools and their views of sexuality, family, and communal life. This study aims to develop a comprehensive picture of these struggles of Palestinian male adolescents in East Jerusalem, recognizing that masculine identity is a key issue.

Keywords: adolescence, masculinity, identity, peace and conflict

Whoever wants to see a part of Paradise, let him look to Beit al-Maqdis (Jerusalem).

—Mohammed

Let all the peoples walk there (Jerusalem) each in the name of its gods.

—Micah

Young men in East Jerusalem—a time bomb waiting to happen.

—Palestinian professor, Jerusalem

Over the past few decades, there has been a growing concern with regard to what is seen as the increasing violence, lawlessness, and general malaise of Palestinian young men. Newspaper articles, policy discussions, and concerned parents have begun to focus on the problems of boys and young men in East Jerusalem (Sa'ar & Yahia-Younis, 2008). Although these discussions have often given way to larger concerns about collective identity and the changes occurring to Palestinian masculinity in Jerusalem, there is a clear and pervasive sense that these boys are a group of people who are seen as endangered. This danger comes on numerous fronts: from the growing violence in the community, drug trades, poor education, and a poor and stagnant economy.

It is impossible to separate Palestinian young men from their locale in Jerusalem itself. Jerusalem is the capital of the Jewish national homeland for Israelis and the sought capital of a future national state for the Palestinians. Israelis were politically granted a return to Jerusalem. Palestinians have always lived in Jerusalem but have lived under occupation there since 1967 (Oren, 2003). For both sides, the city has religious, historical, and psychological significance. Jerusalem conjures up many conflicting images. It is a place infused with symbolic representation, magical thinking, and enormous anxiety. It is seen as a sacred city of religious peace and meaning. It is a city of imagination; it is the place for the return of the messiah, the beginning of a new era, and a return of the religions of old. It is also a place of historical strife led by various hegemonic kingdoms. People from around the world are drawn to its spirit. At the same time, many who come and see the politics on the ground are repelled by its tensions and violence.

Along with its religious and political significance, Jerusalem is also a real city and a very challenging place for East Jerusalem Palestinians living their daily lives. From their poor economy, to housing evictions and restrictions to expansion, to an inadequate

school system, East Jerusalem residents suffer under the current political situation (United Nations General Assembly, 2013). Conflicts abound, and great tension is created within the city as settler groups seek to lay claim to specific areas formerly owned by Jews hundreds of years ago. In general, Jerusalem Palestinians see little hope for a favorable settlement and consequently see little opportunity. Visually, in this divided city there is a stark contrast between the vibrant, prosperous, progressive, clean, and orderly West Jerusalem of the Israelis and the occupied, depressed, poverty-stricken, and troubled East Jerusalem of the Palestinians.

While all of the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem suffer under the current situation, young men from East Jerusalem are under particular stress. They are subject to searches, stops, hostile interrogation, and detention on a daily basis. Many struggle with poverty, violence, joblessness, overcrowding, and an ineffective school system. Moreover, for these young men, violence is both a common street narrative and a big part of their reality. They are regularly both victims and perpetrators of violence on a few fronts.

Violence in East Jerusalem takes the form of domestic violence against women; peer bullying; violence in the schools; juvenile delinquency, including vandalism and theft; and communal inter-clan violence. The latter is often provoked as a response to, and as a consequence of, violence between young men, often over territory, drug selling, or girls. Press coverage and other accounts amplify these events and have raised concern within the Palestinian communities about the futures of these young men. Many within the community fear that the young are becoming morally delinquent (Sa'ar & Yahia-Younis, 2008).

However, in addition to the ubiquitous acts of violence that are perpetrated by young men from East Jerusalem, there is a serious concern about the mental health effects that being victims of violence creates for these boys. There is a significant amount of literature that links trauma, particularly being the victim or witness of violence, to later psychiatric problems in children. Martinez and Richters (1993) found that an alarming 50% of children who were exposed to traumatic violence when they were less than 10 years old developed future psychiatric problems. Distress symptoms were highest for children who had witnessed violence against someone they knew. Studies have linked adolescents' exposure to violence to psychological trauma symptoms (Espelage, Havard, & Asidao, 2000; Singer, Anglin, Song, & Lunghofer, 1995).

Flannery, Singer, Williams, and Castro (1998) found that as high school students' exposure to violence in the home increased, the students reported more anger, anxiety, depression, dissociation, posttraumatic stress, and violent behavior. DuRant, Getts, Cadenhead, Emans, and Woods (1995) found a significant relationship between the youths' exposure to violence and their feelings of hopefulness and sense of purpose in life. Importantly, exposure to violence or victimization in the home was a stronger predictor of emotional distress than violence experienced in the community, although experiencing community violence had a high impact as well.

Being a victim of violence has serious repercussions for Palestinian youth. Violence against young men often occurs as a consequence of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. This violence includes direct victimization by Israeli security forces, communal resistance to Israeli hegemony, and psychological threat and intimidation. These types of episodes intensified after the 2014 Gaza War, as young Palestinian men protesting the war were harassed by Israeli

fundamentalists. One young man was burned to death by Jewish extremists a few blocks from Al-Quds University in Bet Hanina (Kershner, 2014).

Studies by Arafat and Musleh (2006) demonstrated the great exposure that Palestinian children have to violence in their lives: One in six Palestinian children reported being injured in the second intifada. One in 10 lost a family member during the second intifada. Forty-eight percent indicated that they witnessed violence; 10% witnessed the destruction of their homes. Fifty-two percent felt that their parents cannot protect them. This leads to the feeling that life is not safe and to pessimism, depression, and considerable psychosocial strain (Arafat & Musleh, 2006).

Despite the pervasive agreement within the Palestinian community and media that there is some sort of crisis occurring with these young men, no documented research has yet explored the nature of the issue. The current study aims to develop a comprehensive picture of the struggles of Palestinian male adolescents and to suggest successful coping practices that can be used by these young men to grapple with their stressors in East Jerusalem. This study is the first to survey the actual experiences of boys and young men in East Jerusalem. It explores their experiences at home, in school, and in the community, looking at their identities in relation to the challenging world in which they live.

Of specific interest to the study is how the violence in the lives of these young men in East Jerusalem has its roots in, and has considerable effects on, the expression of masculine identity. Our research was guided by various theoretical positions on masculinity, including the functionalist approach, which views masculine expression as reflective of work and family roles that fit the needs of a particular society (Gilmore, 1990). Societies that present harsh requirements for survival produce an aggressive code of masculine expression. Constructivist approaches (Breines, Connell, & Eide, 2000) emphasize the social nature of gender. People do not have a gender; rather, they perform it (Butler, 1990). Moreover, masculinities are multiple and compete for ascendancy. Masculine notions of behavior are passed on by way of scripts, which represent a combination of social pressures, roles, and historical legacy.

The Palestinian narrative of masculinity involves numerous discourses and narratives. As Peteet (1994) notes, many Palestinians try to transform humiliation. This involves resistance confrontations with Israeli security forces. Another narrative involves the family responsibility and taking care of others (Massad, 1995). A third script involves martyrdom and sacrifice within the context of intifada (Johnson & Kuttab, 2001). Islamic masculinity is yet another masculine source with a return to the gender patriarchy of old. Another model of masculine modeling is the *professional man* who has succeeded through secular education. This is highly valued due to the prospects for social mobility. A final masculine script, especially for the young, is the hope of the life of football. It is attractive as it provides an outlet for militaristic aggression and there is a small possibility of inclusion in Israeli teams even though racism abounds.

Older males over 40 years of age talk about a traditional code of masculinity embodied by the term *rajol*—to be a man in the strong traditional sense. This is not an aggressive or angry notion but involves many healthy aspects: responsibility, independence, reliability, and ability to endure hardship and pain without complaint. Self-respect and refusal to be usurped or "taken from" (relating to the occupation) are also important. Over the last 40 years, Pales-

tinian nationality and identity have become more involved with political struggle, resistance, and national unity, and Palestinian Authority efforts have pushed young people to create a productive identity (Spielberg, 2011).

One of our basic assumptions is that masculinity in East Jerusalem is shaped by blocked economic opportunities that hinder the fulfillment of a provider role and by the limitations and humiliation imposed by Israeli security on expressions of heroism and resistance.

The current study is one of the first studies of men in a zone of conflict that recognizes the masculine gender as a space of inquiry. Previous research and thinking have failed to focus on men as a culturally constructed target, assuming that females are the major victims and ignoring abuse and violence directed toward males in conflict situations. The failure to adequately research, recognize, condemn, or respond to boys and men with the exaggerated risk of summary execution, sexual violence or mutilation, and conscription as both a human rights abuse and a human security and male identity problem is significant (Carpenter, 2006).

While there is a paucity of research on the nature of the specific factors that influence the experiences of young Palestinian men in East Jerusalem, the presence of blocked economic opportunities and the experience of humiliation and racism show similarities to the lives of Black males in the United States (Vaughans & Spielberg, 2014). Racism is understood here to mean the assignment of inferiority to a racial group and the exertion of power over that group. Racism can be individual, institutional, and cultural (Jones, 1997).

As such, the methods and specific interview techniques and questions used in this study were adapted from research techniques used to explore the experiences of Black males in the United States. The study aims to begin a serious inquiry into the roots of the crisis facing these young men and to encourage further interest in generating solutions to current issues.

Broadly, our major research questions were the following: What are the major problems, both real-world and psychological, facing young men in Jerusalem? What types of violent events and other adversities do these young men experience? What is their masculine code of conduct, and how does this code help or hinder them, particularly in school and at work? How can we develop effective strategies and interventions for this population?

Methodology

Through a qualitative study of adolescents and young men in East Jerusalem, this study explores the crisis occurring with this particular population. Over a period of 3 years, 45 young men and 18 young women were interviewed to generate themes and concerns.

This study was coordinated by the Child Institute of Al-Quds University and carried out in conjunction with a number of community partners. In the absence of previous research on this particular set of problems, the implementation of a qualitative study was necessary in order to generate hypotheses.

Sample

This study used a sample of convenience. Subjects were culled from various community centers, Non-governmental organization,

schools, and universities in Jerusalem. Al-Quds University utilized its contacts in order to recruit students, most of whom came from various community centers in East Jerusalem. A number of the older students in the survey came from the population of students at Al-Quds University. The sample included males from all socioeconomic backgrounds between the ages of 12 and 24. The participants were all residents of the city of Jerusalem and its suburbs (Wadi Al Jouz, Silwan, Beit Hanina, At-Tur, Kafr Aqab, Sheikh Jarrah, and the Shuk neighborhood in the Old City). The students attended various Jerusalem schools, including a mixture of private, municipal government, and Palestinian Authority schools (Hosni Al Ashhab, Schools of Shu'fat, Abrahimieh, Bridge, and At Turand Il Iman).

In addition to the main sample of young males, parents, teachers, and appropriate key members of the community, professionals and policy experts were interviewed. These interviews were informal in nature. They were conducted in order to provide background and context for the study. They were not meant to be analyzed as part of the data set. These interviews and meetings also gave us greater entrée into the neighborhoods we entered.

Additionally, following a format developed by Vaughans and Spielberg (2014) to explore similar issues with young Black men in the United States, a focus group with 18 young women was also developed to capture valuable insights about the boys and young men in their lives to attain greater complexity and honesty about the lives of boys. All efforts were made regarding cultural sensitivity and usefulness for the population studied.

Design and Method

Data were collected through both group and individual interviews. Group interviews served as the primary source of data, as the interaction in group interviews among interviewees is ideal for exploring individual and cultural narratives (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Follow-up individual interviews were held with specific individuals to explore important themes raised in groups. Interviews were conducted at the Spofford Playground inside the Old City of Jerusalem and at the Al-Quds Child Institute in Beit Hanina. Consent for participation was obtained from the participants and their families. The Al-Quds University Research Committee approved the integrity of the research. Data were collected by two psychologists—one Palestinian and one American—and two research assistants. The research team also included a physician and expert in child health, who added a study segment of health practices relating to sexual concerns and smoking. Interviewing was done largely in Arabic, although one focus group with advanced university students was conducted in English. Researchers first met with the staff of the various centers and with the university administration, which later explained the nature of the project to the youth at the centers. Interviews were conducted and data were collected over a 5-hr period with breaks for lunch and some recreational time.

Forty-five young men were interviewed. Ages ranged from 12 to 24 years. Subjects were divided into six focus groups with six to eight participants in each. We had an additional group with females, as previously mentioned.

The group interviews contained two parts. The first part involved interviewers asking 10 broad questions designed to explore key areas of the lives of the young men as determined by the

literature review and themes raised by parents, teachers, and so forth. The questions were loosely modeled on previous attachment surveys (Target, Fonagy, & Shmueli-Goetz, 2003). Examples of the sorts of questions answered included *Tell us three things about your community*, *Tell us three things about your school*, *Tell us three things about your family*, and *Tell us three things about what it means to be a man*. The questions were designed to help understand the young men on their own terms.

The second part of the interview process included an open-ended segment that allowed the young men to introduce their own concerns. Verbatim responses can be found throughout the study, indicated by quotation marks and/or parentheses.

In many cases, the interviewers met one on one with individual participants to ask a number of follow-up questions to clarify and expand the meanings of their initial responses shared in the groups. This approach of following up group interviews with one-on-one interviews has been very successful in helping participants clarify what is on their minds, particularly with populations of disenfranchised youth who are more forthcoming when engaged in respectful dialogue (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2005; Vaughans & Spielberg, 2014).

We also met with various community leaders: those who work with youth, religious leaders, and experts in health and mental health. These interviews (some cited in the following sections) helped provide information on the young men and context to understand them. All interviews were conducted over the course of 3 years. The overall responses of the groups did not differ during this time period.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed by a consensual qualitative research (CQR) group, identifying salient themes among participants' responses about their experiences (Hill et al., 2005). Using CQR methods, the themes that emerged from participant responses included, but were not limited to, overall mental health concerns, masculine identity, educational issues, and family and community perceptions. The primary focus was thematic. Researchers looked for common responses by respondents in order to identify recurring themes in their lives. Once these themes were identified, researchers then went through a painstaking process of follow-up interviewing at the end of the focus group with all the samples in order to determine if these themes were acknowledged by participants as valid in their lives. The data were then coded thematically. Codes created related to the themes of masculinity, mental health concerns, family, community, sexuality, views of Israelis, health behavior, and schools. This paper focuses specifically on masculinity, education, and overall mental health concerns. Not all of these themes are discussed in this paper; a future manuscript is being prepared on those topics not included herein. Codes were analyzed through a series of deductive and inductive analysis. First the codes were used to conduct deductive analysis within a data matrix that allowed for within-center and across-center analysis. An inductive process was then used to reinspect the data and modify the codes. The process encouraged a recursive process of deductive and inductive coding (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Masculine Identity

The Palestinian scripts of masculinity, rajol, and the idea of the political man of the intifada appear to be waning in the current East Jerusalem generation. Today, sources of masculine development and strength are unavailable for many. There are few opportunities for community service and even fewer jobs available.

Nearly 55% of the respondents in the current study reported spending close to 4 hr a day on the Internet. They have an "Internet identity," which is largely based on popular music and consumerism. Adnan is a good example:

> I spend most of my day surfing the net. Even though I have a university degree, there is no job for me here. I smoke a lot of hashish—it keep me from thinking about my life here. I don't feel like a man. I feel like I am already dead. They don't let us to have a life here.

They identify with the music of "Black men" (African Americans) in an area where they can demonstrate and express their own forms of political and psychological resistance to the "Occupation." The vast majority of our respondents, however, say that they are not politically active and fear to be so.

Positive political identity is largely absent from the young men in East Jerusalem, and there is little sense of connection to the larger Palestinian enterprise on the West Bank. The West Bank has enjoyed significant economic and psychological growth over the last 7 years (Spielberg, 2011), but young Palestinian men from East Jerusalem do not aspire politically or connect to the patriotism and hope of the West Bank youth. Because of the checkpoints, they are cut off from socializing and experiencing the growing culture of the West Bank, and some feel actively abandoned by the Palestinian Authority. This is extremely unfortunate, as adherence to a "resistance" identity has been correlated with greater mental health and fewer symptoms of trauma and distress (Owsley et al., 1998).

The situation of young Palestinian men involves many discourses, but paramount among them is the narrative of a wounded and or failed masculinity. This literature has many roots. The realities of racism and violent oppression—both physical and psychological—take their toll on the spiritual and psychological vitality of young men. The inability to partake in healthy and productive means of masculine expression leads to problems of aggression and control, self-esteem issues, conflicted dependency needs, and racial identity issues (Lee, 1989).

However, the current study found that two important factors had considerable impact on healthy masculine development: religious involvement and socioeconomic status. Students in the current study who were actively involved with their mosques and their religious communities appeared to be more consolidated in their identities and were functioning at a higher level of development. Islam is certainly a major contribution to the identity of these youth; for many, religion provides purpose, strength, and transcendence. Eighty-five percent of the participants were Muslim. Approximately half of the sample saw themselves as very religious; the other half identified as secular and were very involved with the culture of the Internet and in becoming more modern and involved with Western society. Nevertheless, 75% of students agreed that life "could get better if more students were involved with Islam

and religious studies," indicating a strong support for this traditional source of meaning.

Additionally, the more affluent (25% of our study) fared much better with their masculine identity, based on reports of academic excellence, ambition, positive paternal role models, supportive mothers, and less negative interaction with Israeli soldiers. They live away from the Holy Basin, the region of Jerusalem that is home to some of the most ancient, holy, and contested sites of Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem and the neighborhoods of Silwan, At-Tur, and Sheikh Jarrah. These neighborhoods are heavily policed, and the young men who live there encounter security forces more frequently than those who live outside of this area. Musa's (16) father is a doctor, and they are well off financially. They live away from the Holy Basin in Bet Hanina, which sees less intrusion by Israeli security forces. Unlike young men who were neither religiously involved nor affluent, Musa felt connected to his religious community and had hopes for the future. Musa shared that "The mosque is very important to me, as are my studies. I want to be an engineer when I grow up. It is important for a man to be religious and to support his family."

It is the male youth from poorer neighborhoods and in contended areas of the city who struggle to find forms of masculine identity. Facing impediments to traditional and modern constructive masculine endeavors, they have developed alternate means of a masculine protest—what Majors and Mancini-Billson (1992), in a discussion of beleaguered African American boys, call "cool pose." This pose emphasizes grotesque and exaggerated forms of masculine protest, including "swagger, hyper-violent stance towards others, and belligerence" (Majors & Mancini-Billson, 1992, pp. 37–38). There is a strong interest in violent music, often playing it openly in the streets, and in African American slang. This is manifested in the outer community of West Jerusalem as well, complete with aggressive behavior—an attempt to impress girls while simultaneously sending a message to Israeli authorities: "We are here and want to be acknowledged and known." Their observations are in accord with a general "over machoism" that occurs in the Arab world among men without productive work (Abdallah, personal communication, 2014).

A number of young men see individual acts of resistance as their only means of masculine expression. As one director of a local youth center (who requested anonymity for himself and his agency) said in an interview:

> Many of the boys play a game of chicken with the Israeli security forces. They throw rocks and they are belligerent—it is the only way they get to protest their lives. They feel good if they can make a soldier run after them—but not if they are caught. (personal communication, anonymous)

This kind of behavior puts them in jeopardy. Displays of defiance and assertiveness garner the attention of Israeli security police. Young men, when asked why they are in West Jerusalem (mainly Independence Park and Bell Park), become belligerent in reaction to this form of police intimidation since East Jerusalem residents are allowed to attend public parks in the West. The belligerence leads to further humiliation of these Palestinian boys and then greater acts of rebellion and defiance to attempt to repair their shame, lowered self-esteem, and perceived weakness.

Young men without educational ambitions or prospects who engage in cool pose also smoke at high rates, and many use alcohol and drugs. Smoking is their biggest vice, partly to convey masculinity and partly to soothe stress (Dajani, Abdeen, & Qasrawi, 2013). Swaggering, posturing, and a tough demeanor lead to fights between Palestinian youths, who are looking for some kind of victory over rival clans or over the honor of girls, particularly sisters. A girls' focus group in the current study noted that "the young men act violently and quarrel and use sharp weapons often to solve simple problems."

Relations With Israelis

Despite the aggressive posturing and macho displays of defiance of some, it seems that the overwhelming concern of many of the Palestinian boys we interviewed is the danger they feel from Israeli security forces. It makes it very difficult for them to think of their lives in a formulated, integrated fashion with vision, imagination, planning, and foresight. The fear of being hurt or even killed by Israeli security forces is omnipresent. One of the major fears for these youths is going through military checkpoints. Beginning in the 1990s, the Israel Defense Forces has erected security checkpoints with the aim of preventing individuals with harmful intent from entering into Israeli territory. However, despite the intended security aim, many Palestinians report experiences of humiliation at the hands of the soldiers stationed at checkpoints. According to a 70-page complaint in July 2015, Palestinians are often abused and humiliated. The complaint included cases of soldiers using physical violence, confiscating phones and smashing them, and keeping Palestinian travelers waiting for over 3 hr in the sun (Zitun, 2015).

The fear of entering checkpoints keeps many Palestinian youth fearful of venturing out to either the Old City or to the West Bank, where there are more opportunities available to them. In general, they suffer from significant annihilation anxiety and trauma, making it difficult, if not impossible, for them to think about themselves or to develop an appropriate and successful masculine identity. Because of a felt lack of protection and powerlessness, there is a strong sense of humiliation and risk that has developed among the young men, which assaults their traditional code of manhood.

Anas's worst episode occurred when he was returning from a visit to Ramallah at the Kalandryia checkpoint. He was asked if he would become an informer for the police in exchange for money for university. The officer said, "You are a good kid, but you must know others who are working against the state of Israel." When he refused to do this, he was kept overnight in solitary confinement, unable to contact his family. Anas said, "This was the worst episode of my life. My mother was crazy with fear. I was terrified. But still I refused. To be an informer brings great shame to me and my family."

In the interview, Anas reported recurring thoughts of the incident, insomnia, nightmares, exaggerated responses to noise and slight stresses, and significant anxiety and depression. He shared that he would like to be in treatment if he had the resources. He also said that he experiences strong feelings of "powerlessness," which tend to make him more angry and prone to extremist views. He said, "This episode convinced me that we Palestinians here in East Jerusalem are doomed. There is no life for us, and they will harass us till we leave."

The fear of being reported to Israeli intelligence by informers in the community is an omnipresent fear among Palestinian youth: "We are afraid to talk with each other about the smallest things for fear that we will be betrayed and reported to the Shabak" (Abdel). This leads to considerable isolation, loneliness, and a constant lack of support between people who need it the most. Social support has proven to be one of the most beneficial interventions for treating people affected by trauma (Van der Kolk, Van der Hart, & Burbridge, 1995), but these youths are without such help. In contrast, Afghan boys, when they have a problem, turn to a religious leader like the mullah or a teacher to seek help and guidance or seek the help of fellow students (Davis, Richards, & De Berry, 2003). Some young men in East Jerusalem are fortunate enough to receive such support at their mosques or at various community centers that provide support and recreational activities such as soccer. But many do not have such opportunities for masculine support or outlets.

Mental Health Concerns

In addition to challenges related to masculine identity, more general mental health concerns were a common theme in the interviews. The decision not to administer a formal posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) measure was made so as to ensure that the focus remained on hearing the voices of the young men themselves. Nevertheless, it was clear that many were struggling with the aftereffects of violent experiences with Israeli security forces in which they were the subject of violence or a witness to such violence. A number of interviewees indicated that they are hit by their fathers on a regular basis. Ten of the young men—close to 30% of those interviewed—reported severe stress symptom levels, including intrusive thoughts, nightmares, anger outbursts, and anxiety preventing them from leaving their houses.

The major problem is not just that these young men experience traumatic episodes of harassment or witness violence—it is more in the nature of the trauma. Young men in East Jerusalem appear to be experiencing a constant feeling of dread and fragmentation. The dread relates to the constant sense of foreboding and diminished opportunity for a satisfying life. This is compounded by the lack of avenues for the expression of their distress and even fewer for treatment for depression and/or trauma-related disorders. The mental health issues and victimization of youth in the present compound to create trauma and even greater mental health issues in the future.

Family Life and Community

The family should be a protective zone allowing young people to refuel and repose in a protected environment, where they can plan, dream, and develop a self-identity (Winnicott, 1965). However, life in East Jerusalem prevents this. Nearly all of the respondents reported that they live in extremely overcrowded conditions. The following is an excerpt from an interview with one boy, Abu:

> There is great pressure in the family. There are 11 people in my family living in two rooms. I am in the middle of my brothers. We have no privacy. It is impossible to study and to think.

Israeli housing policies do not permit expansion of housing units, and there are impossible hurdles to getting permits to build (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, 2010). Overcrowding has many implications. A lack of personal space and privacy leads to fights and antagonisms as well as inappropriate sexual behavior.

Economic hardships cause great tension, anxiety, and pressure in the family. Survival is the main topic of family life. The boys know that their parents' lives are very stressful and that their parents are unable to protect them from the violence of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

Nevertheless, the closeness of family has positive effects in terms of providing love and support, especially from mothers. The majority of young men reported that their mothers were "tender and loving." Mothers are said to provide the greatest amount of guidance and administration for the family. They are seen as playful and happy, playing both "mother and father roles" (Abu).

Many fathers, however, appear to be almost entirely absent from family life, often working two jobs. Nearly a quarter of the boys report having absent fathers, due either to deportation or imprisonment by Israelis. Another 25% of our sample reported that their fathers were working abroad. Again, this lack of a positive role model impedes the development of positive masculine identity. Boys from more middle-class homes who are more removed from the conflict zone report that their fathers are more available to them. The absence of fathers appears to make the relationships of brothers more important. However, many brothers are not often available due to the political situation, indicating that they have been under detention in some way.

A significant number of the boys report that their mothers spoil them. Here we see an expression from the boys that indicates that they require more guidance and limits. Interviews with mothers suggest that they attempt to "give them everything," reflecting an attempt to "protect them"; however, the boys experience guilt and concern about their mothers' "over-sacrificing."

Many boys note that extended family could be closer if not for the checkpoints, which divide extended families from the West Bank. The security wall has separated families, making the preservation of traditional customs and relationships more difficult. Discipline, particularly when meted out by older siblings, can be harsh and dangerous.

Because of overcrowding, family fragmentation, and traditional mores, autonomy on the part of the boys is difficult: "There is pressure to not express your opinion or your wishes" (Sabri). This is seen as a lack of respect for parents, particularly in the East Jerusalem crucible, which cannot tolerate the "chaos of disagreement" (Sabri). In the larger context, coercive and frightening, the inner Palestinian community is also difficult: "There is trash all over the neighborhoods, the alleys, and the Old City is the worse" (Sabri). The theme of garbage emerged in all of the interviews, reflecting the boys' feeling that they are "viewed as garbage" and that "our lives are garbage." Work with African American boys produced similar information referenced in our published work (Vaughans & Spielberg, 2014). The image of rats was an identifiable image that served as a description of their actual living environment and as their subjective self-state, a feeling of surviving like a rat, and a reflection of how they are viewed by others. For Palestinian youths, instead it is the spread of trash all over, a reflection of a growing fear of the continued infestation of their communal and inner lives.

Everyone interviewed in every setting noted the ever-increasing ubiquity of drugs and drug abuse in the community. Hashish, cocaine, and hallucinogenic drugs are being used and sold regu-

larly: "This is the way that I get by. It makes me and others forget what is happening here; that we have no life and no future" (Aymad). Aymad explained that the drug trade is tolerated by the Israeli security forces. With a lack of jobs, some Palestinian boys work for drug gangs. "There is a spread of addictions to alcohol and drugs especially in the alleyways of the Old City at night" (Imad). The boys themselves appear to be using drugs at alarming rates, 40% of them using hashish on a daily basis.

Thus, we see a stunted expression of masculinity in the absence of real capacities to engage in the world productively. Similar to African American boys in poor communities, the expression of masculine assertion has become perverted in the face of lacking constructive engagement and opportunity within the community.

Education

The challenge of obtaining a decent education is one of the most important issues facing the young men of East Jerusalem. Currently, the dropout rate for young men is 50% at the high school level. Boys and young men are not required to attend school beyond the 10th grade.

There are four categories of schools. The participants attended either public, private, Wafa (religious), or United Nations schools. Each school category accounted for approximately a quarter of the sample, and there was a wide variety of reactions articulated about each school category.

There are approximately 70 public schools in East Jerusalem. Boys and girls are educated separately. Palestinian students face a particular conflict when they attend public schools. The curriculum is written by the Palestinian Authority, but the schools are under the jurisdiction of the Israeli Education Ministry. Typically, a Palestinian who holds Israeli citizenship will be the principal, producing a lack of coordination between the two. Both sides are very interested in test scores for different reasons. Education is a high priority for the Palestinian Authority. Israeli administrators want to show that students are functioning at an acceptable rate despite the lack of resources accorded to public schools. Schools are overcrowded, often violent and lacking in discipline and direction.

According to one of the teachers interviewed, the average class size is 45 students. Classrooms are seen as chaotic, with two groups, which Aymin describes as "the stupid ones and the stupider ones." Aymin describes how the "teachers are unable to control the students. There is chaos and violence in the schools."

The students feel this tension. Most of the students interviewed felt that they were not receiving a good education in the public school. Many teachers will give higher grades just to satisfy the requirements of the system and to meet the demands of the two stakeholders. Students feel abandoned by the Palestinian Authority and unacknowledged by the Israeli Ministry. As a result, many feel like objects or numbers: "The scores and grades are not true" (Hussein). One teacher remarked that students are passed along until the 10th grade without rudimentary reading or mathematical skills. "Most of the kids do not feel motivated" (teacher). Students are often disobedient and without purpose. Teachers struggle, becoming either too harsh or too lax.

Teachers are extremely frustrated. A Palestinian school psychologist interviewed shared that "There are many dangerous and angry kids in the school." According to one school psychologist, the classes are divided: half for the interested students and half for the unruly who sit in the back. Teachers have lower expectations for this latter group and attempt only to manage them. The students reported some corporeal abuse in the schools.

> The teachers use physical violence, verbal abuse, and insults to try to keep order. The teachers are not trained well, and they are overwhelmed. The children are often traumatized and living in very crowded conditions. They come to us unable to focus and sometimes disturbed. There are few resources for counseling in the schools.

There is considerable violence. There are fights over honor among differing gangs and clans, fights over girls, occasional attacks of teachers, and vandalism. Sexual harassment and abuse is another issue. Young men are often sexually frustrated and overstimulated by crowded home situations, where sex between parents can be seen and heard. The Internet is also a source of overstimulation. This leads to acting out in school to a degree that many girls we interviewed reported a fear of going to school. The boys tend to evince a hypermasculinity in which they swagger and sway, showing that they are men. This can lead to violence on many levels (East Jerusalem school psychologist, personal communication, 2012).

The boys who go to private schools are the happiest and most studious. They report liking their schools and generally admire their teachers. However, they also report a certain stress in coping with the demands and rigor. Palestinian society in general puts a great emphasis on education and the reverence of the teacher (Arafat & Musleh, 2006). Many teachers use advanced methods and have fun with students. This has a positive effect on student achievement. Private schools also have the infrastructure to support sports, the arts, and field trips.

School has always played a very stabilizing role for children in Palestinian society. At times, amid armed violence in the community, closures, and curfews, the schools have become more important as one of the few places students can express themselves, be with peers, and achieve both academically and socially. School attendance is strongly associated with childhood resiliency for Palestinian youth and correlates with academic achievement (Apfel & Simon, 1996; Arafat & Musleh, 2006; Boothby, Strang, & Wessells, 2006).

The voices of the young men tell us that the public schools are failing to serve this function. In particular, they are failing to serve as a buffer to the violence and danger of living in East Jerusalem. This undermines their development as adolescents and their identity formation. As Graca Machel (2001) notes, war prevents the establishment of a coherent identity: "In the aftermath of war, many adolescents have great difficulty imagining a future that holds a meaningful place for them" (p. 45). The public schools are evidence of a different form of powerlessness and a misdirected attempt at masculine identity.

Sexuality

In addition to the gender-specific violence with which young Palestinian men are entangled, there are also issues relating to sexual development and sexual violence. There is a combination of factors that serve to make the development of sexuality and a sexual identity difficult. Traditional Palestinian notions (Adibi, 2006) of sexuality involve being celibate until marriage, being responsible and polite with women, and protecting them. At the same time, these young men live in a city in which they are

bombarded by images of sexuality. The media portrays sexual mores as much more relaxed. Young men are then often overstimulated from overcrowding at home and from the Internet.

Typically, there is little contact between the sexes and, as a result, boys have little familiarity in dealing with girls. Many report being "very nervous" in their company: "I try to understand them without getting nervous" (Abu). He has little help with such.

The boys are also trying to grapple with girls' growing equality and empowerment. Girls are succeeding at higher rates in both middle school and at the university than in previous years (Office of the Dean, personal communication, Al-Quds University, 2012). They are less in need of "protection" and more in need of respect and equality. This represents a challenge for the young men we interviewed, who are struggling with the conflict between tradition and the modern age.

At the same time, there is a serious lack of sex education at school and home. Boys and girls attend separate schools and afterschool programs. As a result, young men know little about reproductive health, birth control, masturbation, or personal hygiene and are embarrassed to ask. The source of information is teachers of science or religion. Typically, the information is focused on hygiene, purity, religion, and the Halal and Haram. Some are lucky enough to be able to talk to their fathers or to an older relative. But for most, this is a terrain of discomfort, shame, and ignorance. During the interview, their discomfort was palatable. Abu remarked, "This is a difficult topic; I have not discussed this before." Their feelings and understanding of relationships and sex are largely absent, jeopardizing a healthy approach to sex and sexuality as part of their identity as young men. However, they all know about AIDS and HIV. The incidence of AIDS in East Jerusalem is growing. Most students know that it is transmitted by tattooing, drugs, sex, blood transfusions, contaminated needles, and razor blades. Yet a number of the boys interviewed had serious misconceptions about HIV: "Having sex with animals can lead to AIDS" is just one example.

Nevertheless, the group had many ideas about how to avoid getting the disease, some erroneous. Others simply demonstrated the view that repression of sexuality would be the best and only way to avoid disease. The use of condoms and other safe sex practices was never discussed.

Disturbingly, a number of the older boys reported knowing other young men who are engaged in prostitution in the Old City of Jerusalem: This occurs "late at night in the alleyways or small hotels. They are mostly with the tourists" (Yusef).

Concerning the issue of sexual abuse, the consensus suggested that there continues to be sexual abuse, harassment, and sexual exploitation in the community: "There is the abuse and exploitation of children lured by toys and sweets. There is the harassment of girls. There is sexual abuse within families, between students in schools, or in the street" (Marwan).

Although participants in the focus group reported never having experienced sexual abuse, many had relatives or friends who had this experience. The boys agreed that many cases go unreported: Arab society puts full responsibility on the victim, as it can otherwise cause major problems between families, which can result in violence and in "some case to murder" (Mohammad).

Conclusion

Young men in East Jerusalem live in a no-man's-land where the opportunities for becoming a productive and family man are slowly disappearing. Not surprisingly, many see marriage and family life as a distant—perhaps impossible—goal, given that they must have an income to support marriage. Their frustration with the political and communal stagnation is palatable.

Carpenter (2006) argues that gender-based violence against men must be recognized as such, condemned, and addressed by civilian protection agencies and proponents of a "human security" agenda in international relations. We agree strongly. Men deserve protection against these abuses in their own right. Moreover, addressing gender-based violence against women and girls in conflict situations is inseparable from addressing the forms of violence to which civilian men are specifically vulnerable—in this case, constant harassment by Israeli security forces.

This work has highlighted the main areas of violence and trauma affecting young Palestinian men, including their fear of Israeli security personnel. The biggest casualty may be their basic humanity and attachment skills. Because of their enormous fears, including humiliation, the capacity of many to reflect on their inner and external lives is undermined. They suffer from problems in mentalization (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2004), with attendant conflicts in agency, planning, concentration, and attachment and closeness with others. As Twemlow (2000) notes, such children under stress develop an "alien self," devoid of needs for tenderness and closeness. Living under close scrutiny and occupation intensifies their alienation. They face difficulties in speaking and sharing among themselves.

Violence presents one of the narrative packages that affect young men. It contributes to a masculine script that emphasizes toughness—resistance on one hand but also resignation and depression on the other. This research has highlighted young men in both camps. Other masculine scripts also compete—the desire to be a professional man, a rajol, a respected family man, or a physically competent sports man. But these dreams are beyond many. Only those with community and family support are likely to achieve a pathway to these kinds of masculine dreams and be able to rise above the violence around them.

Exposure to such violence is linked to trauma, depression, emotional helplessness, numbness, and despair. The effect of such violence also manifests itself in psychological disturbances, acting out, aggression, educational conflicts, and health risks (Vaughans & Spielberg, 2014). Our research has also highlighted the conflicts that beset Palestinian young men in school and their experience of family life. Violence and the difficulties experienced by their parents in protecting and providing for them have also been given a platform in this work.

A substantial number of these young men are clearly affected by their exposure to violence. Emotional numbing, nightmares, and recurrent images of the events are the most common symptoms. None of the young men who were seen in the study had received treatment for these problems. Moreover, their community has failed to recognize the factor and has not addressed the need to help these boys.

The narratives that have typically been used to encapsulate the lives of Palestinian men no longer work effectively in the realities of East Jerusalem life. It is difficult for them to develop a mean-

ingful political resistance to Israeli occupation. Because of a failed educational system and job discrimination, they cannot develop a professional identity. Many inhabit a masculinity contoured by Islam; this is a saving grace for them. But too many in this difficult place live a life of menial work and Internet meandering. Their fate, like that of all Palestinians, is tied to the hope of political breakthroughs. But given the poor current prospects for peace, those interested in the welfare of Palestinian young men cannot wait. This is also true for Israeli policymakers and administrators who govern East Jerusalem and have a stake in the emotional and economic stability of this population. They must act to help and protect these young men now. The current violence in East Jerusalem echoes this necessity even more strongly. The young men of East Jerusalem have little to lose.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations for helping young Palestinian boys and men:

1. Recognize the humanity of young Palestinians by helping to break down the walls of silence that surround them. Provide them a space for recognizing their own fears and feelings, a crucial first step to helping them.

2. Place greater emphasis on identification of positive images of Palestinian identity. Provide positive role models. Negative depictions of Palestinians as weak, stupid, or dangerous must be counteracted by active attempts of the Palestinian Authority, which is actively working to create a sense of personal efficacy and agency among young Palestinians (Spielberg, 2011). In this regard, a concerted linkup between these young men and the educational outreach department of the Palestinian Authority is vital so as to ameliorate the social and cultural alienation that these young men feel.

3. Establish manhood training and rites of passage programs. African American psychologists have successfully pioneered the establishment of such programs in the United States (Lee, 1989). These programs will allow for the development of group support and emotional catharsis and will be a place for them to talk about the rigors of their lives. Such programs led by community members should emphasize the following skill building: wellness and bodily care, sexual education, antiviolence and bullying initiatives, educational skills, problem-solving skills, vocational guidance and training, communal betterment, respect for women, and drug prevention. These programs will also help young men incorporate principles of Palestinian spirit and soul through the use of music, the arts, and traditional dance. They will address the concept of how to resist Israeli occupation in ways that are emotionally and physically helpful. These programs can be used in community settings, mosques, and educational institutions.

4. Develop training for contact with Israelis: Youth need training in how to deal effectively when encountering Israeli security forces. The idea is to cooperate but to do

so in a manner that is not perceived as humiliating. Such programs have been used effectively in the United States and have cut down on the number of violent interactions between African American males and the police (Brown-Jones, 2014).

5. Provide mental health assistance: Approximately 30% of the young men are suffering from their exposure to violence; they are in need of treatment and protection. They are also in need of resilience training. This training should involve their families and community authorities, who can help provide protection and support. Given the paucity of mental health services, it is crucial that the community embrace this problem and provide support. The use of traditional healing ceremonies and religious and folk cleansing rituals will be of crucial importance as well.

6. Establish educational initiatives. Many of the boys who go to private and mosque schools are doing well in their schools. However, those who are going to Israeli schools are not doing as well. There must be ancillary programs that build educational skills and provide tutoring and counseling. Such initiatives have proven to be very successful among populations of educationally challenged and alienated young men (Vaughans & Spielberg, 2014).

7. Cultural aspects of identity, an important bridge to society (Winnicott, 1953), are unavailable to these young men. They need a space to investigate and test out their own selves and to engage in artistic and cultural endeavors that consolidate and link their individual development with their historical selves in a way that is both transcendent and active. This is one of the tasks of masculine development. Community agencies must be well funded to do this. There must be attempts to link young men to sources of Palestinian culture more fully available on the West Bank. Israeli authorities should allow more contact between young men and avenues of cultural identity that are available through the Palestinian Authority on the West Bank.

8. The Israeli security systems must review their protocols in dealing with young Palestinian men. They must strive to reduce violence against Palestinian young men who are physically and emotionally damaged by overly harsh methods of checking identity and disciplining boys and young men who are, for the most part, law abiding and looking for productive outlets. These young boys and men need a good education, jobs, and hope, not abuse and targeting. These goals are in the interests of both Palestinians and Israelis, who will continue to live together for the foreseeable future.

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